

# Job 10:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction;

## Analysis

**If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction.** Job expresses profound existential despair in this verse, articulating a theological crisis where both wickedness and righteousness seem to lead to suffering. The Hebrew word translated "wicked" is rasha'ti (רָשָׁעְתִּי), and "righteous" is tsadaqt (צַדָּקְתִּי). Job acknowledges that if guilty, he deserves punishment—but even if innocent, he cannot defend himself or find relief.

"Yet will I not lift up my head" reflects the posture of shame and defeat. In ancient Near Eastern culture, lifting one's head signified honor, confidence, and vindication, while a bowed head indicated disgrace. Job feels trapped: guilt brings woe, but even innocence provides no escape from affliction. The phrase "full of confusion" translates the Hebrew seva' qalon (שְׁבָעָן), literally "satisfied/filled with disgrace." Job is saturated with humiliation, unable to comprehend why God allows his suffering.

This verse captures the inadequacy of the retribution theology held by Job's friends—that suffering always results from sin and righteousness always brings blessing. Job's experience contradicts this formula, revealing that God's purposes transcend simplistic moral calculus. His cry "see thou mine affliction" (re'eh onyi, רֵאֶה עֲנֵי) appeals to God's compassion, acknowledging that only divine intervention, not human understanding or merit, can resolve his crisis.

## Historical Context

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The book of Job is set in the patriarchal period (roughly 2000-1800 BC), before the Mosaic Law, as evidenced by Job's role as family priest offering sacrifices (Job 1:5) and the absence of references to the exodus, Torah, or temple. Job lived in the land of Uz, likely in Edom or northern Arabia, making him a non-Israelite who nevertheless knew and worshiped Yahweh.

The poetry of Job reflects ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature, paralleling works like the Babylonian "Ludlul Bel Nemeqi" ("I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom") and the "Babylonian Theodicy," which also wrestle with innocent suffering. However, Job surpasses these works by rejecting easy answers and maintaining that God, though mysterious, is just and sovereign.

Job 10:15 falls within Job's second response to Bildad (Job 10). Job's friends operate from a strict retribution theology common in ancient wisdom traditions—sin causes suffering, righteousness brings prosperity. Job's speeches progressively deconstruct this worldview, demonstrating that while God is just, His ways transcend human comprehension. This prepared Israel (and all readers) for deeper understanding of suffering's role in redemption, ultimately fulfilled in Christ's innocent suffering for sinners (Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2:21-24).

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does Job's experience challenge simplistic explanations for suffering in the Christian life?
2. What does Job's honesty in expressing confusion and pain teach us about authentic prayer and lament?

3. How can believers maintain trust in God's goodness when circumstances seem to contradict it?
4. In what ways does Job's innocent suffering prefigure Christ's atoning work on the cross?
5. How should Job's example shape our responses to those experiencing inexplicable suffering?

## Interlinear Text

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אָמַן	בְּשֵׁם	עֲתָה	לֹא	צִדְקָתִי	לֹא
H518    If I be wicked	woe	H0		unto me and if I be righteous	H3808
H7561	H480			H6663	
yet will I not lift up	my head	I am full	of confusion	and	thou mine affliction
H5375	H7218	H7649	H7036	H7200	H6040
					עֲנֵנִי:

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 3:11** (Evil): Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

**Job 9:15** (Righteousness): Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.

**Psalms 25:18** (Parallel theme): Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

**Job 10:7** (Evil): Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.

**Malachi 3:18** (Righteousness): Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.